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A VISION FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

Report of the Provincial - Municipal Countryside Working Group

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Six groups were established in November 1991 to study issues and provide advice in the following areas: Urban Form, Countryside, Human Services, Infrastructure, Economic Vitality and Investment Planning and Financing Mechanisms.

The reports which have been produced by these groups will be used as background information during a lengthy period of public discussion and refinement. The reports represent the work and advice of individuals chosen by their ministry, municipality or organization for their knowledge of their particular subject area. The reports represent a consensus of the group and as a result do not necessarily represent the opinions of individual members of the group.

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A VISION FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

THE COUNTRYSIDE WORKING GROUP REPORT

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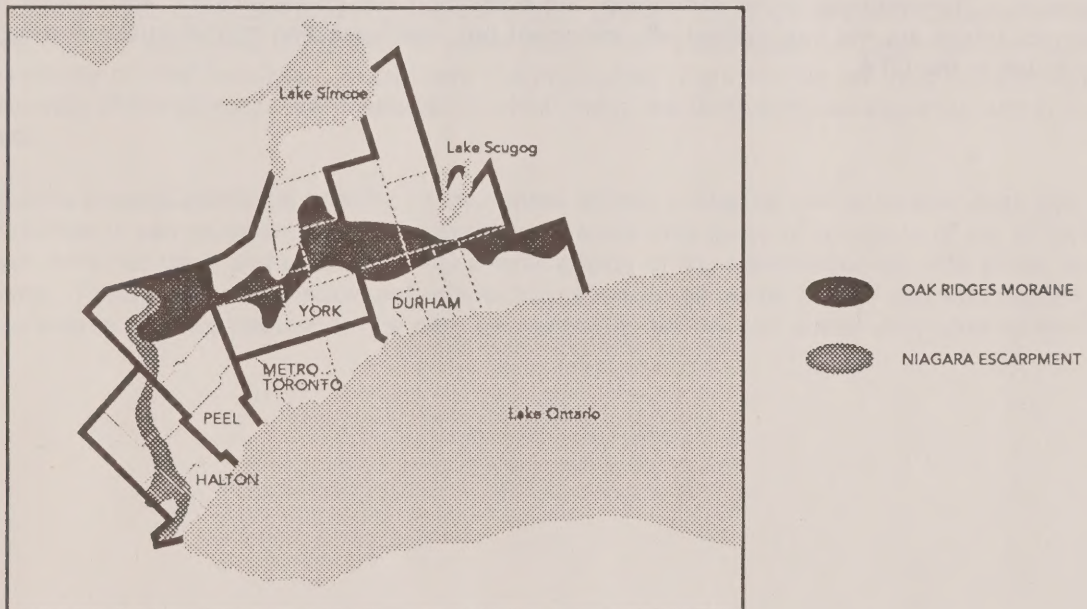
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION - PUTTING THE COUNTRYSIDE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Countryside of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is a diverse cultural and natural landscape encompassing greenlands, agricultural lands, resource industries and settlement areas. Yet more important than its anatomy are the Countryside's personality and functions which contribute to its unique character.

The Countryside has rarely been satisfactorily defined. Historically, it has been considered as that area of the GTA which is not "urban". It has often been described as "undeveloped" land awaiting some form of "higher and better" land use. Thus, our relationship with the Countryside has tended to be exploitive, dominating, and insensitive to its unique characteristics and its interrelationship with urban areas.

These interrelationships are deeply rooted in social, economic, and ecological interdependencies. Areas and activities in the Countryside such as settlements, agriculture, aggregate extraction, tourism and recreation, transportation and utility corridors, and natural and cultural heritage systems are fundamentally connected to urban areas.

Within the boundaries of the GTA, are parts of such significant features and landscapes as the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges Moraine and the shorelines of Lake Simcoe, Lake Scugog and Lake Ontario. The area includes a host of significant wetlands, river valleys, natural areas and a significant agricultural land resource base. Although these areas are predominantly in the Countryside they contribute to the overall quality of life for the entire GTA.



A new attitude towards the Countryside and a new relationship between the Countryside and urban areas must be negotiated to ensure that the GTA continues to be a healthy and diverse community. This relationship must recognize and value the interrelationship and interdependencies between the Countryside and urban areas.

The Countryside Working Group identified three guiding principles which it believes should form the foundation of this new relationship. These principles are:

- the Countryside is a distinct and valuable entity which contributes to the overall quality of life in the GTA;
- much greater attention must be given to addressing issues and problems in the Countryside in order to protect and enhance its unique character, values and functions; and,
- greenlands and agricultural lands are critical to the long term social, economic and environmental health of the entire GTA and must be actively protected for the future.

With these principles in mind, the Countryside Working Group was asked to examine issues in the Countryside such as:

- identify greenlands and formulate a strategy for their protection;
- formulate a strategy for establishing a trail system;
- recommend principles which should apply to the range of uses in the Countryside ensuring their character and viability.

The strategies and recommendations in this report represent a new approach to planning for the Countryside. The emphasis is on protecting and enhancing the characteristics and values of the Countryside which are not only intrinsically important but which are also critical to the diversity and quality of life in the GTA.

CHAPTER 2 GREENLANDS - PROTECTING THE FUTURE

BACKGROUND

One of the most significant and valued characteristics of the Countryside is the quality and diversity of the natural and cultural heritage environment more generally referred to as "greenlands". The Countryside Working Group was given the task of developing a strategy for protecting, enhancing and linking these "greenlands" in the Greater Toronto Area. Although this task was given to the Countryside Group it must be remembered that greenlands do not exist solely in the Countryside - they link the Countryside with the urban areas and Lakes Simcoe, Scugog and Ontario by way of the north and south flowing river valleys. Consequently, the protection of greenlands is as important in urban areas as it is in the Countryside perhaps even more so in that opportunities in the urban areas are limited and we must take advantage of them.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GREENLANDS

Greenlands serve many significant natural functions providing us with clean water, air, and by preserving the diversity of plant and animal habitats and communities. Protecting these natural functions and processes and maintaining a balanced ecosystem is an important reason for protecting greenlands.

There are also purely economic reasons for protecting greenlands. For instance, protecting wetlands and recharge areas can reduce the need for costly downstream flood and erosion control works. The protection of these areas can also improve the quality of water flowing into Lakes Ontario, Simcoe and Scugog thereby improving the quality of water drawn from these lakes for urban use and increasing the useability of their beaches. In addition, the protection of greenlands can help ensure the quality and quantity of the groundwater resource on which many residents and municipalities within the GTA depend.

Greenlands provide additional benefits beyond these strictly ecological and economic ones (see Figure 2). Greenlands can contribute to the physical and mental well being of residents of the GTA; put us in touch with our past; and strengthen the overall quality of life experienced by both urban and rural residents. Finally, there is a moral and ethical obligation for all residents and decision makers in the GTA to ensure that we pass on to the next generation, a healthy and sustainable environment.

Figure 2 - NATURAL HERITAGE BENEFITS

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- Contribute to maintenance of health and quality of air, water, soil and plant and animal communities

GENETIC BENEFITS

- Constitute irreplaceable genetic resources in terms of the diversity of flora and fauna
- Contain genetic resources of both existing and future value to humans

AESTHETIC BENEFITS

- Enhance visual experience
- Provide artistic inspiration
- Nature appreciation

PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS

- Visual release from stresses of urban life
- Enhance quality of life
- Responsibility and moral obligation to future generations

SCIENTIFIC BENEFITS

- Research
- Environmental benchmarks/indicators
- Education
- Biological diversity

ECONOMIC/RECREATIONAL BENEFITS

- CONSUMPTIVE USE - renewable (e.g. sustainable fishing, hunting, trapping, woodlot management)
- NON-CONSUMPTIVE - passive recreation (e.g. walking, and hiking, outdoor photography, canoeing, swimming)
- PUBLIC SAFETY - economic benefits of avoiding hazard lands, discharge areas or steep slopes, hydrological storage, wetlands, flood plains, etc.
- PROPERTY VALUE - enhance property values for properties located next to natural areas or incorporating natural features into their design

WHAT ARE GREENLANDS?

In simple terms, "greenlands" can generally be described as: significant natural and cultural heritage features and landscapes; systems and areas performing important natural processes and functions; and, open space corridors and areas providing active and passive recreational opportunities.

The various types of greenlands can be categorized according to their particular form, function and/or heritage significance. The following five components have been defined by the Countryside Working Group to provide a basis for developing a strategy to protect greenlands:

- i) Environmental Health and Hazard Lands;
- ii) Natural Heritage Features and Systems;
- iii) Recreational Lands;
- iv) Cultural Heritage Features and Landscapes; and,
- v) Linkages.

i) Environmental Health and Hazard Lands include lands and water that:

- ensure a sufficient quantity and high quality of water for use by humans and other living organisms (e.g. water recharge/discharge areas, wetlands, rivers, groundwater aquifers); and/or,
- comprise areas of existing or potential physical hazard (e.g. flood plains, steep and unstable slopes).

ii) Natural Heritage Features¹ and Systems include lands and water that:

- contribute to the health and diversity of the natural environment; and/or
- provide for appreciation and understanding of natural processes and ecosystems by present and future residents of the GTA.

Figure 3 illustrates the core areas, corridors and connecting links in a conceptual natural heritage system.

iii) Recreational Lands include lands and water:

- which provide or could provide a range of recreational opportunities and can be both linear and nodal in nature (e.g. regional/provincial parks, ski areas, trails, beaches, shorelines, riverbanks).

¹. Many of these natural heritage features have already been identified by various sources. A list of specific natural heritage features and the agencies responsible for their identification and management can be found in Appendix IV.

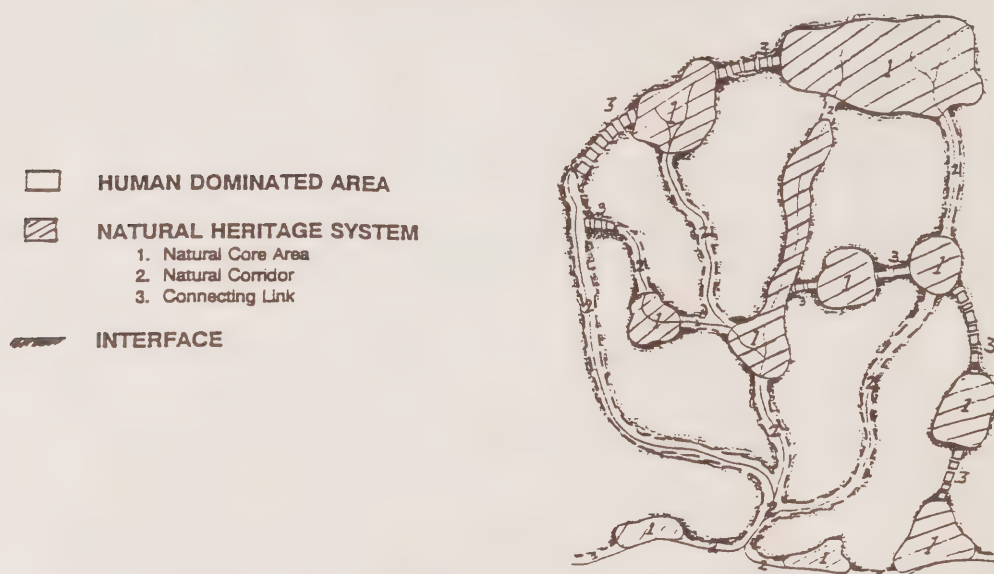
iv) **Cultural Heritage Features and Landscapes include:**

- significant cultural heritage features and landscapes (e.g. archaeological and historic sites, agricultural lands, etc.). Definitions for both cultural heritage features and cultural heritage landscapes can be found in the attached Appendix V.

v) **Linkages include lands and water:**

- which connect the various types of greenlands into a "**greenlands network**". Examples of lands which can provide these physical linkages include: abandoned rail and road right-of-ways, greenbelts and urban separators, local parks, and compatible agricultural lands such as pasture lands. Linkages can also be created, in the future through natural forest regeneration and reforestation efforts.

Figure 3 - CONCEPTUAL NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM



Natural heritage systems are composed of interrelated and interconnected core areas, corridors and connecting links which require protection to ensure the long term health of ecosystems.

- **core areas** are natural areas defined by municipalities, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) or conservation authorities lands providing significant natural heritage benefits (e.g. ANSI's, wetlands, significant woodlands, endangered species habitat, ESA's).
 - **corridors** are more or less linear biophysical features such as valley and stream corridors, lakeshores and ravines.
 - **connecting links** are largely natural areas that connect core areas and corridors with each other.
-

CURRENT STATE OF THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ENVIRONMENT

Humans have had an enormous impact on the quality and character of the natural environment in the GTA. The GTA was once a pristine natural environment inhabited by native cultures. In the late 1700's, European settlers arrived and began to significantly alter the natural heritage environment through massive forest clearing and the filling of wetlands to make way for agricultural operations. As the dense forests were removed, and as the human population increased, settlements located along the shores of Lake Ontario began to expand northward.

Today, the GTA is the largest urbanized metropolis in Canada and is home to approximately four million people. Over the last 30 years, a significant portion of this population has been housed in relatively low density residential developments. As a result, a large amount of land has been consumed for urban uses resulting in the degradation or loss of natural areas and processes.

Despite the stresses that urban growth has placed on the natural environment, the GTA still contains considerable biological diversity. The report "*Space for All: Options for a Greater Toronto Area Greenlands Strategy*" (Kanter, 1990) identified 975 individual natural areas within the GTA ranging from Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI's) to forested areas to streams supporting significant fisheries. It is important to point out that the natural areas referenced in this report represent only those identified prior to 1990. A comprehensive inventory of all natural areas in the GTA has yet to be conducted and needs to be a funding priority for all of the municipalities and agencies involved.

It is interesting and important to note the location of many of these greenland features. Only 10 percent of the greenland features identified in the Kanter report are located in Metro Toronto - the most developed municipality in the GTA. The three Regions of Halton, York and Durham have each approximately 25 percent of the 975 identified greenland features located within their jurisdictional boundaries. The remaining 15 percent of the total greenlands are located in Peel Region. It is quite evident from these figures, that a significant majority of the greenland features are located in that part of the GTA which can generally be described as the "Countryside".

The cultural heritage environment has also been a victim of the last 40 years of rapid urbanization in the GTA, as was the natural heritage environment. It has been estimated that by 1973, 60% of all known archaeological sites within the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area had been totally destroyed while the remaining sites had been partially disturbed (Konrad, 1974). In a recent paper presented at the Quaternary Sciences Institute Symposium, Derek Coleman and Ronald Williamson put forward evidence that approximately 5,000 archaeological sites were destroyed in Halton, Peel, and York Regions between 1951 and 1971. It is estimated that approximately 1500 of these sites would have been considered significant enough to warrant further study. The number of historically and architecturally significant buildings and groups of structures which have disappeared is equally immense.

Although there has been a reduction in the magnitude of these losses following the introduction of subdivision review procedures, archaeological master planning and heritage resource policy initiatives, a more proactive approach to protecting our valuable cultural heritage resources is still needed.

**Table 1 - NUMBER OF GREENLAND FEATURES/AREAS IN GREATER TORONTO
AREA BY MUNICIPALITY (IDENTIFIED AS OF 1990)**

GREENLAND ELEMENT	MUNICIPALITY					GTA TOTAL
	HALTON	PEEL	YORK	METRO TORONTO	DURHAM	
Provincially Significant Life Science ANSI's	11	6	9	4	10	40
Provincially Significant Earth Science ANSI's	8	8	6	3	4	29
Regionally Significant Life Science ANSI's	11	10	15	7	4	42
Total ANSI's	30	24	30	14	18	111
Provincially Significant (Class 1,2,3) Wetlands	16	11	13	3	32	75
Locally Significant (Class 4 to 7) Wetlands	82	21	37	2	49	192
Total Wetlands	98	32	50	5	81	267
Coldwater Streams	11	4	10	0	21	36
Warmwater Streams	3	3	14	3	8	31
Migratory Streams	4	1	0	1	9	15
Total Streams	18	8	24	4	38	82
ESA's	39	48	64	50	82	283
Provincial Parks	1	1	2	0	1	5
Other MNR (Crown) Lands	4	0	2	0	6	12
Conservation Areas	11	7	20	1	17	56
Other Cons. Auth. Lands	25	32	20	24	16	117
Regional Forests	9	0	18	0	1	28
TOTAL	235	152	230	98	260	975

(As amended from Kanter, 1990)

PROBLEMS/ISSUES

There are several key problems and issues which impede the protection of greenlands in the GTA. It is recognized that many of these problems are not unique to the GTA; however, due to the relatively small geographic area of the GTA; the magnitude of the population; and the pressures for development and growth, the following problems have been recognized.

- There is a lack of clearly stated provincial direction, objectives and policies for greenlands resulting in a variety of standards and rules for greenland protection.
- There is a lack of legislative tools and other mechanisms for protecting greenlands.
- There is a lack of mechanisms to coordinate protection of greenlands across municipal boundaries.
- There has been no priority for funding for the identification of natural and cultural heritage areas.
- Humans are often seen as separate from the environment and that human communities as superior to other biological communities.
- There is a lack of recognition that natural areas within arbitrary jurisdictional boundaries can be part of much larger natural systems.
- The protection of greenlands has generally focused on identifying and protecting specific areas such as significant wetlands or forested areas. However, relatively little attention has been given to understanding the processes, relationships and interactions of the parts.
- Two of the largest regional municipalities in the GTA do not have approved official plans which compounds the interjurisdictional problems (between regions, municipalities and the Province) associated with greenland protection as well as other planning issues.
- There is a lack of protection for greenland systems in municipal official plans.
- A proactive approach to the protection of cultural heritage resources is lacking.

Many direct and indirect impacts have resulted from our past approach to the protection of greenlands. Some of the impacts include:

- the destruction of indigenous plants, animals and landform features and their supporting hydrologic, nutrient and soil regimes. For instance, approximately 80 percent of the historic wetlands in southern Ontario have been lost through filling or draining;
- the loss or destruction of some landform features which perform key natural processes (e.g. loss of infiltration capacity impacting groundwater quantity and stream base-flows)
- the destruction or fragmentation of habitat and natural corridors on which specific plant or animal species depend (e.g. isolation of genetic pools for plant and animal reproduction, loss of deer wintering yards);
- the direct but delayed destruction of some natural features due to side effects of human activities such as salt spray, nitrous oxide pollution, lowering or raising of water tables, etc.;

- the contamination of ground and surface water (e.g. combined sewer and storm water outlets, and improperly designed, located or maintained septic systems)
- a gradual reduction in soil, water and air quality (e.g. groundwater contamination from poorly maintained septic systems, poor agricultural and construction practices leading to stream sedimentation) leads to the destruction of and reduces viability and vigour of certain species;
- the introduction of non-native plants and animals, insects or pathogens (e.g. purple loosestrife, garlic mustard, starlings, dutch elm disease, zebra mussels) which have destroyed or replaced native plants and animals and fundamentally altered habitat;
- the incremental losses and fragmentation of formerly extensive natural habitats has increased the vulnerability of species requiring large territories (e.g. bobcat, pileated woodpecker, red shouldered hawk);
- a reduced quality of the visual landscape as natural heritage features are replaced through land use changes and the construction of transportation and utility corridors. Areas can be incrementally impacted, and their social and environmental values diminished until their value as natural areas is lost;
- the sedimentation of downstream rivers and increased flooding resulting from the extensive use of non-porous materials in urban areas necessitating expensive remedial actions such as dredging and flood and erosion control works;
- the loss or destruction of cultural heritage resources, such as archaeological sites and artifacts, historic and/or architecturally significant buildings and groups of structures.

OBJECTIVES OF THE GREENLANDS STRATEGY

In recognition of the importance of greenlands, the Countryside Working Group identified several objectives to guide the development of the Greenlands Strategy. The objective of the Greenlands Strategy is to ensure that:

- Water is **drinkable and swimmable**;
- Air, water and soil are **healthy and clean**;
- Natural areas are **protected and connected**;
- The ecosystem is **biologically diverse, sustainable and balanced**;
- Cultural heritage areas are **identified and protected**;
- Greenlands are as **accessible** as possible to people.

A GREENLANDS STRATEGY - PROTECTING THE FUTURE

Within the GTA, various aspects of the land use planning function are conducted by three levels of government - lower tier or local municipalities, upper tier or regional municipalities and the province. All three levels of government conduct land use planning in accordance with the provisions of the Planning Act.

In the GTA, regional municipalities are generally responsible for planning the overall development of the region and are intended to assume certain approval powers over local municipal planning. Local municipalities are to develop detailed planning policies and by-laws utilizing the powers under the Planning Act but in keeping with the intent of the Regional Official Plan. In reality, two of the five

regions in the GTA do not have approved Official Plans. As a result, much of the planning direction and activity in these regions occurs at the local municipal level.

The province provides input into local and regional planning through its various ministries and agencies and maintains ultimate approval over some of these planning initiatives. The province also provides direction to municipalities, on planning matters, through policy statements issued under the Planning Act. However, the policy statements issued to date have been limited in number and topic, lengthy in preparation and do not take an ecosystem approach.

Even though the rules of planning are the same for all municipalities, the way these rules and powers are applied varies from region to region and local municipality to local municipality. This variation in applying planning powers has serious implications for issues and problems which transcend local municipal and regional boundaries. These problems are particularly acute in the GTA with 5 regional and 30 local municipalities.

The protection of greenlands is one of these multi-jurisdictional issues. It is an urban issue as well as a Countryside issue. The current lack of consistency in the protection of greenlands and the failure to recognize their importance to the entire GTA are the central reasons for developing the following Greenlands Strategy. The Countryside Working Group has identified seven broad strategic action statements which form the essence of the Greenlands Strategy. Each strategic statement is discussed in the following sections along with recommendations from the Working Group outlining more specific actions which should be taken to achieve the Greenlands Strategy.

Legislation

The province must consider legislative amendments and/or new legislation in an attempt to provide all levels of government with the necessary tools to protect greenlands in the GTA.

In order to effectively protect greenlands for the future there are certain legislative weaknesses that need to be addressed by the provincial government. Some of these inadequacies could be addressed through amendments to existing legislation while others may require the drafting of new legislation.

The Countryside Working Group recommends that the following legislation be amended:

Planning Act

The Planning Act is the primary legislative vehicle governing land use planning in the Ontario. The Act has focused on how to develop land as opposed to how to maintain a balanced, healthy, and diverse community. The Planning Act is currently being reviewed by the Commission on Planning and Development Reform in Ontario (Sewell Commission). It is expected that many of the inadequacies which limit the Act's effectiveness in protecting the natural and cultural environment will be dealt with through this forum. With this in mind, the Countryside Working Group has identified several possible amendments which could make the Planning Act more effective in protecting greenlands.

It is recommended that the Planning Act should be amended so that:

- 2.1 natural heritage features and systems including valley and stream corridors are not considered part of the developable land base;
- 2.2 environmental principles similar to those in the Environmental Assessment Act are added to the Planning Act;

- 2.3 site preparation (e.g. removal of vegetation, grading/stockpiling of topsoil) cannot occur until all of the necessary development approvals have been given;
- 2.4 municipalities be required to designate, in their Official Plans, all known natural heritage features and systems (as identified in Appendix IV) within their jurisdictional boundaries;
- 2.5 municipalities be required to include policies in their Official Plan, to protect designated natural heritage features and systems
- 2.6 cumulative impact analysis be a required component of municipal planning;
- 2.7 the preparation of Heritage Master Plans becomes a required component of the municipal planning process;
- 2.8 the land and cash-in-lieu requirements of the parkland dedication provision be increased to allow the development of linear and linked natural heritage systems.

Trees Act

In September 1990, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), with assistance from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), struck the Tree By-laws Advisory Committee to examine ways and means of controlling tree cutting on private lands. In June of 1991, the Committee released its final report.

The report identified several shortcomings in the Trees Act which limits its effectiveness in protecting privately owned woodlands including:

- lack of effective controls such as the issuance of work permits and "stop work" orders;
- exemptions in the Act such as "good forestry practice" and "own use" are broad enough to allow landowners to avoid complying with the intent of municipal by-laws enacted under the Act.
- penalties for violating the Act are insufficient to act as effective deterrents to violations.

The Countryside Working Groups recommends that the Trees Act be amended to:

- 2.9 provide municipalities with the ability to regulate the destruction or removal of trees on privately held lands.

Conservation Authorities Act

The term "conservation of land" as found in Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act is narrowly defined and can only be applied to regulate the placing or dumping of fill that could cause instability or erosion and affect the conservation of land in a strictly physical sense.

Currently the Conservation Authorities Act does not permit authorities to regulate the construction of buildings or structures outside the defined floodplain. In addition, conservation authorities can only regulate the placing or dumping of fill and not the removal of material. Both of these inadequacies limit a conservation authority's ability to protect valley and stream corridors.

Authorities have, in some instances, been able to apply their regulations to waterfront areas, although the Conservation Authorities Act does not explicitly reference this activity.

The Conservation Authorities Act should be amended so that:

- 2.10 the term "conservation of land" under Section 28 of the Act is expanded so that the placing or dumping of fill, the location of buildings and structures and the alteration of a waterway, anywhere in a valley system, can be regulated from a conservation/protection perspective as well as a hazard perspective;
- 2.11 conservation authorities are allowed to pass specific regulations controlling the location of buildings and structures in valley systems and to control the removal and regrading of material/fill;
- 2.12 the regulatory powers of conservation authorities regarding protection to waterfront lands are extended in a manner similar to that regarding valley systems.

Heritage Act

Currently, the Ontario Heritage Act is in the process of being reviewed and redrafted. In order to function effectively in the GTA, the Countryside Working Group recommends that the Act be amended to include such provision as:

- 2.13 automatic protection of significant heritage resources;
- 2.14 ministerial discretion to direct proponents to assess the heritage significance of sites;
- 2.15 increased penalties for non-compliance with the Act;
- 2.16 broadened mandate for Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee's (LACAC's) so as to include archaeological matters.

Environmental Assessment Act

The Environmental Assessment Act (EAA) is presently under review by the Ministry of the Environment. From the standpoint of this Working Group it is recommended that:

- 2.17 the EAA and the Planning Act work in closer concert with one another;
- 2.18 that cumulative impact analysis be more definitively addressed;
- 2.19 that compliance and effect/effectiveness monitoring be more comprehensively addressed; and,
- 2.20 that private sector waste management and other projects that affect water quality be brought under the Act.

Land Base Modification

The uncontrolled modification to the terrestrial (e.g. vegetation, soil, landforms) and aquatic (e.g. surface and groundwater quality and quantity) land base has been identified as a serious concern by the Working Group. In the following the term "land base" refers to both terrestrial and aquatic areas.

Land base modification can include such things as:

- soil removal;
- tree cutting/vegetation removal;
- alteration to landforms e.g. removal of hills;
- draining or filling of wetlands;
- loss or obstruction of groundwater recharge capacity.

There are several pieces of legislation that regulate the modification of certain aspects of the "land base" (e.g. Trees Act, Planning Act, Topsoil Preservation Act, Ontario Water Resources Act, Fisheries Act, Conservation Authorities Act, Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act, etc.). However, taken collectively, they do not address all aspects of land base protection. In addition, some of the legislation is limited in terms of applicability and effectiveness.

The Countryside Working Group recommends two possible options for addressing this problem:

- 2.21 The first is to amend the various pieces of legislation dealing with land base modification to provide the capability to control this activity.
- 2.22 The second option is the introduction of a new piece of legislation - a Land Base Modification Act. It is envisioned that this Act would not be tied specifically to land use planning or development because other activities also result in unacceptable modifications (e.g. the filling of a wetland or the removal of a woodlot not related to a planning application). The Act could be geared toward controlling/regulating land base modifications possibly through a permit system.

Provincial Direction/Policy

The province should clearly outline provincial directions, policies, and guidelines in order to provide consistency in the way greenlands are protected in the GTA.

In addition to providing legislative improvements to protect greenlands in the GTA, the Province should also enunciate its direction and policies regarding greenlands to ensure that consistent protection measures are applied across the GTA.

- 2.23 The Countryside Working Group has identified the following areas where this provincial direction should be given:
 - a) natural heritage system identification, protection and management
 - b) woodlands protection and management
 - c) protection of streams and stream corridors
 - d) subwatershed planning, urban drainage and storm water management
 - e) cumulative impact analysis
 - f) water conservation
 - g) landform conservation

- h) ways and means of achieving compact and clustered developments
- i) cultural heritage resource identification, assessment, protection and management
- j) wetlands protection

2.24 The Countryside Working Group also recommends that government programs which encourage the protection of the natural environment continue or be enhanced. Some of these programs include:

- a) Metro Toronto's Remedial Action Plan (RAP)
- b) Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority's LSEMS- Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy;
- c) Ministry of Agriculture and Food's Land Stewardship Program, Foodsystems 2002, and Tillage 2000;
- d) MNR's Community Wildlife Involvement Program, Community Fisheries Involvement Program, Conservation Land Tax Reduction Program, Managed Forest Land Tax Rebate Program,
- e) Conservation Authorities Comprehensive Basin Management Strategies/subwatershed planning.

Municipal Official Plans

Regional and local municipal official plans should contain policies specifically directed toward the protection of the various types of greenlands identified in this report.

The Official Plan is the most appropriate planning document for enunciating policies to protect greenlands. As a greenlands network is interjurisdictional in nature it would seem most logical that regional municipalities, in conjunction with local municipalities, MNR and conservation authorities, identify a broad regional greenlands network in their official plans. Local municipalities could then refine and expand the regionally identified greenlands network to incorporate local greenlands and greenland networks.

The Countryside Working Group recommends that:

- 2.25 through the official plan process, regional municipalities clearly establish the limits of urban, rural and greenland envelopes;
- 2.26 local and regional official plans contain policy statements recognizing the importance and benefits of protecting and enhancing greenlands;
- 2.27 local and regional official plans contain policies which will apply to the protection of a greenlands network;

Appendix III contains a list of possible policy requirements for protecting archaeological resources which could be included in municipal official plans.

Land Stewardship

The province, through its various relevant ministries and agencies, and local and regional municipalities should promote and encourage the use of private land stewardship techniques for protecting and managing greenlands in the GTA.

The province, its agencies, and local and regional municipalities should encourage and promote individuals and community-based groups to effectively utilize the range of available stewardship options. Many stewardship options were outlined in the "*Space for All: Options for a Greater Toronto Area Greenlands Strategy*" and one of its background reports "*Land Stewardship Options*".

Provincial agencies such as the Ministries of Natural Resources, and Agriculture and Food, the Ontario Heritage Foundation and other non-government organizations can provide valuable advice and research into stewardship techniques and landowner incentives for using public/private stewardship programs.

The Countryside Working Group recommends that:

- 2.28 the province provide enabling mechanisms to allow for easier use of stewardship tools, particularly land trusts and conservation easements;
- 2.29 all levels of government should promote and encourage the use of land stewardship techniques as a method of protecting greenlands in the GTA.

Community Involvement

All levels of government should encourage and facilitate community-based involvement in the implementation of a greenlands strategy in the GTA.

Community-based involvement is essential for the success of the Greenlands Strategy, not just by the Countryside community but also the urban community as both will benefit from the continued long term health of greenlands. Community involvement is particularly important given the serious economic constraints faced by all levels of government. Simply put, governments do not have the human and financial resources to implement this strategy alone.

Many individuals and community groups have the desire, commitment and expertise to be valuable partners in achieving the protection and management of greenlands. Community-based groups can be a resource for educating and informing the general public of the significance of our natural and cultural heritage as well as being actively involved in the implementation of management and protection programs.

Community involvement in protection of the natural environment has been achieved through regional Ecological and Environmental Advisory Committees and conservation authority working groups for major undertakings such as Comprehensive Basin Strategies. Other groups have proven track records in implementing and maintaining such things as trail systems (e.g. Bruce Trail Association), Community Wildlife Involvement Programs, and Community Fisheries Involvement Programs. In addition, community groups, in partnership with all levels of government, have become involved in reforestation efforts and natural heritage enhancement/re-establishment initiatives (e.g. Save the Rouge Valley, Friends of the Don River, Friends of the Humber River, etc.).

The Countryside Working Groups recommends that:

- 2.30 all levels of government should ensure a two-way flow of information between all interested parties as a way of encouraging community involvement in greenlands protection;

- 2.31 development of standardized data banks/collection techniques be promoted (e.g. Geographic Information System compatibility pamphlet) to maximize the sharing of information;
- 2.32 formal explanatory and promotional information and brochures on natural and cultural heritage protection be developed and disseminated for use by municipalities, local developers, proponents and planners and community groups;
- 2.33 increased emphasis be placed on training and development opportunities for proponents, development consultants, municipal planners and the public on cooperative and innovative programs for natural and cultural heritage protection and management;
- 2.34 all levels of government encourage community groups to become involved in the development of greenland protection and management policies/strategies;
- 2.35 all levels of government actively encourage and provide organizational and developmental support to community-based groups in implementing strategic actions and programs which are most effectively delivered at the local level (e.g. land trust, stewardship programs, reforestation efforts, establishment and maintenance of trails, Community Wildlife Involvement Programs, Community Fisheries Involvement Programs, Remedial Action Plans, etc.).

Agency Coordination

It is imperative that all levels of government and non-government organizations coordinate their efforts to protect greenlands.

With the number of agencies involved in land use planning in the GTA, greater cooperation and coordination is required to maximize efforts on implementing the Greenlands Strategy. Given the multi-jurisdictional nature of the greenlands network envisaged by the Countryside Working Group it is recommended that:

- 2.36 The Province establish a multi-agency Greenlands Committee composed of regional and local municipalities, non-government organizations and provincial and conservation authority staff to advise on the implementation of the Greenlands Strategy.
- 2.37 The Greenlands Committee ensure that the strategy is implemented consistently through the Official Plans of the various municipalities.
- 2.38 The Committee would provide a forum for coordinating the various agencies and groups involved in the Strategy and for resolving any problems/disputes arising from the implementation of the Strategy.

Acquisition

The province in conjunction with regional and local municipalities, conservation authorities, and non-government organizations, should establish an acquisition program for key or seriously threatened greenlands.

An acquisition fund and program is needed to acquire key greenlands when other methods of securing sites have failed. Emphasis should be placed only on those sites that provide key public access to the larger system or those which are seriously threatened and which form an integral part of the larger

Greenlands network. The program should clearly outline criteria for selecting sites for acquisition as well as the method to be used to prioritize their acquisition. It should be stressed that acquisition should only be used as a last resort.

The Countryside Working Group recommends that:

- 2.39 The province, in conjunction with regional and local municipalities and non-government organizations, should establish an acquisition fund and program to protect key greenlands. The program and fund could possibly be administered by an agency such as the Ontario Heritage Foundation.

CHAPTER 3 AGRICULTURE - UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE

BACKGROUND - THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture and agriculturally related industries are the second largest industrial sector in Ontario. One in every 5 jobs in the province depends on the agri-food sector.

The agricultural sector of the GTA contributes significantly not only to the GTA economy, but also to the provincial economy. There were \$392 million worth of agricultural products produced in the GTA in 1986 (Census). This represented 8 percent of Ontario's total sales of agricultural products in that year. In addition to the economic value, as outlined in Table 2, agriculture in the GTA has other important values, as outlined in Figure 4.

Table 2 - AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS FOR THE GREATER TORONTO AREA

	Number of Census Farms	Area of Census Farms (acres)	Area of Improved Land (acres)	Area of Crop Land (acres)	Total Farm Capital Value (million)	Total Cash Receipts (million)
Halton	834	118,805	91,069	74,584	471.4	97.1
Peel	824	129,476	107,173	89,267	515.2	50.7
York	1,391	210,604	166,286	136,740	787.1	86.2
Durham	2,218	358,168	265,081	217,910	844.4	157.8
Total GTA	5,267	817,053	629,609	518,501	2,618.1	391.8
Total Ontario	72,713	13,953,009	10,119,332	8,544,820	23,737.2	5,395.9

Census Farm - As a farm, ranch, or other agricultural holding with sales of agricultural products during the past 12 months or more. Source Census of Agriculture 1986.

Improved Land - The area of improved land consists of the total of areas reported for the following four categories: crop land, improved pasture, summerfallow, and other improved land.

Crops - The area of crops represents the areas planted or to be planted for harvest, as reported by the respondent at the time of renumeration.

Capital Value - This is the value of census-farm capital: land and buildings, machinery and equipment (including automobiles), live stock and poultry. Farm operators were asked to give a value for land and buildings, as well as values for farm machinery and equipment located on their holding regardless of ownership. The value reported was to be an estimate of the market value, not the original, replacement or assessment value.

Cash Receipts - Farm cash receipts from farming operations.

AGRICULTURAL LAND - A LIMITED RESOURCE

According to the Canada Land Inventory (CLI) of Soil Capability for Agriculture, there are only about 5.62 million hectares (ha) of class 1-4 soils remaining in Ontario south of the Canadian Shield. Currently, approximately half the GTA's land base can still be categorized as agricultural.

This amounts to approximately 330,600 ha. From 1981-1986, some 20,600 ha of agricultural land were converted to urban uses in the GTA. This figure does not include agricultural land lost due to severance activity. There has been an 8 percent loss of agricultural land in the GTA which is higher than the average provincial loss of 7 percent for that same time period.

Farmland continues to be an attractive commodity for development, speculation, and life style purposes. Such demands, particularly along the urban fringe, are inflating land values well beyond the property value for any type of agricultural use pricing these lands out of reach of farmers wishing to purchase them.

While it is perceived that there is an adequate supply of farmland in Ontario to meet immediate needs, we cannot forecast the long-term food production and consumption requirements nor can we foresee the amount of agricultural land that will be required in the future. Once farmland is converted to other uses, such as residential, industrial and commercial, it is unrealistic to assume that it can be reclaimed.

The conversion of prime agricultural land to other uses and the fragmentation of prime agricultural areas through severance activity is eroding Ontario's competitiveness for food production. The proliferation of non-farm land uses within agricultural areas seriously impacts the flexibility and efficiency of farm operations. Rural non-farm residents have increasing influence on agricultural activities such as line fencing, drainage systems, the use of pesticides, the location of new barns, and livestock and manure management practices.

Figure 4 - AGRICULTURAL BENEFITS TO THE GTA

Food Production Value: Food (fruit, vegetables, grains, forages) and non-food items (nursery, sod, tobacco), including the export of agricultural goods. Reliability of supply.

Amenity Value: Agriculture provides or supports open space. The aesthetic or amenity value is a non-economic function of agricultural land in the Countryside that may be as important as the economic function of providing food and employment e.g. wildlife habitat, agricultural land serves as a connector between greenlands (biological diversity).

Tourism/Recreation Value: Farm vacations, Bed & Breakfast establishments, boarding and feeding of horses, equestrian sports, hobby farms, 4-H clubs, agricultural fairs, and educational farms.

Cultural and Heritage Value: Century Farms, agricultural community heritage, community identity and continuity.

Commercial/Industrial Value: Service industries which support, or are supported by agriculture include food processing and marketing, machinery and fertilizer production and sales, veterinary services and other support industries. A certain threshold of farm operations contributes to the maintenance and stability of those service industries which are related to agriculture.

CURRENT STATUS OF AGRICULTURE IN THE GTA

Halton Region

The Region of Halton Official Plan (approved 1980) does not recognize prime agricultural lands as a separate land use designation. Only the Town of Milton's official plan distinguishes between agriculture and other rural land.

The Region's gross value of agricultural products sold in 1986 was \$86 million, an increase of 40 percent (indexed to inflation) over the 1981 total. In addition to commodity production, the regional agricultural sector also created 75,310 weeks of paid labour which was directly related to farming operations.

Peel Region

The Region of Peel does not have an approved regional official plan in place. However prime agricultural lands are recognized by separate designations and policies in the local official plans for the City of Brampton and the Town of Caledon.

The gross value of agricultural products sold in 1986 was \$55.3 million, a 23 percent increase over the 1981 total. Farms in the Region created 32,208 weeks of paid labour.

Although the Region has the major urban areas of Mississauga and Brampton and contains a portion of the Niagara Escarpment in northern Caledon, there are still extensive areas being used, or with the potential to be used, for agriculture.

York Region

The Region of York also does not have a regional official plan in place. The only local plans which recognize agricultural lands as a separate designation are Georgina Township and the Town of Markham. The remaining municipalities have some agricultural policies.

The diversity of the landscape and the proximity to a large urban market allow for a wide range of agricultural enterprises in the Region (eg. greenhouses, vegetable and fruit production, dairy, beef, cash cropping etc.).

The gross value of agricultural products sold (1986) was 135.1 million. Farm employment created 69,073 weeks of paid labour in the Region.

Durham Region

Prime agricultural lands are recognized in the current regional official plan (approved in 1978) and the revised plan (adopted by Regional Council in June 1991 but not yet approved). Separate land use designations (ie. Permanent Agriculture Reserve) and specific agricultural policies serve to protect agricultural lands over the long term.

The agricultural industry in Durham Region contributes significantly to the local and provincial economy. The most recent figures (1986) indicate that \$163.8 million worth of agricultural products were sold (gross value of agricultural products sold) representing a 32 percent increase over the 1981 total.

An average of 1 in 5 jobs in the Region are related to the agriculture and food industry with food/beverage manufacturing making up 10 percent of the region's manufacturing sector jobs. In addition, Durham farms created 65,786 weeks of paid labour (1986) providing numerous employment opportunities for the Region.

PROBLEMS/ISSUES

There are many problems and issues related to agriculture in the GTA. These include:

- Loss of productive prime agricultural lands through scattered industrial/commercial development, low density/unserved urban fringe development, estate-residential development (by subdivision and severance);
- Fragmentation of the agricultural/rural land base;
- Increased numbers and types of land use conflicts (complaints about noise, odour and dust from farm operations, pesticide spray drift, trespass on agricultural lands, vandalism);
- Decreasing certainties for farmers (e.g. impacts on their ability to continue farming in the long term and by creating an increased risk to continued investment in farming);
- Poor agricultural land management and farming practices contribute to environmental degradation e.g. impacts on surface and ground water quality;
- Decreasing numbers of farmers results in a diminishing agricultural influence on governments and public policy;
- Although not quantified, scattered development through the severance process is thought to have cumulative impacts on the resource base, the environment and on municipal finances due to costs associated with this type of development;
- Agricultural land is often viewed as "land awaiting development" and not as a natural resource to be protected;
- Renting has become a significant method of increasing farm size (high degree of non-farm ownership of land corresponds with increase in farm sizes through rental agreements). Increased non-resident ownership discourages investments in land improvements and buildings, leads to depletion of soils and fertility and results in an overall environmental degradation due to lack of good stewardship practices;
- Farmers face increased costs to mitigate impacts between non-farm populations and agriculture which lead to long term modifications/adaptations of the agricultural system;
- Non-farm development contributes to the inflationary effects on land prices, pushing the expected value for agricultural land far beyond it's value for agricultural purposes making it difficult for farmers to afford land.

OBJECTIVES FOR AGRICULTURE

Given the economic, environmental, and social importance of agriculture to the GTA, the Countryside Working Group has identified the following objectives to guide the land protection strategies:

- Promote the recognition of agricultural land as a non-renewable essential resource that must be used and managed in a manner that is consistent with Ontario's long term needs as well as recognizing national and international obligations towards contributing to a global food supply;
- Promote sustainable agricultural practices that preserve the agricultural resource base for present and future generations to ensure a secure and safe food supply;

- Advocate the preservation and stewardship of the agricultural land base to secure adequate food production for present and future generations;
- Promote the protection of the agricultural land base as a link between greenland/open space areas.

STRATEGIES FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND PROTECTION

Legislation

The province must consider legislative amendments and/or possible new legislation to provide all levels of government with the necessary tools to protect agricultural land.

Planning Act

There are several changes which could be made to the Planning Act which would provide better protection for agricultural lands. The Countryside Working Group recommends the following amendments:

- 3.1 Revisions need to be made to the Planning Act to require agricultural land protection policies to be reflected and implemented through upper tier Official Plans;
- 3.2 A strong statement must be included in the Planning Act to deal with the importance of preserving the agricultural land base and the provincial interest in the development of agricultural land protection policies;
- 3.3 Cumulative impact analysis should be a required component of municipal planning including an assessment of the impacts on agricultural resources (ie. fragmentation of the land base, loss of productive agricultural land, increased land costs for agriculture).

Options For New Legislation

The province should consider new legislation for the protection of agricultural land as an option to provincial policy.

The Countryside Working Group recommends that:

- 3.4 The feasibility of agricultural land reserves, (as currently exist in the provinces of Quebec and British Columbia) be considered;
- 3.5 The feasibility of conservation easements or the transfer of development rights should be considered as options for protecting agricultural land;
- 3.6 Tax measures be considered to discourage speculation and encourage the retention of agricultural land as an interim measure.

Provincial Direction/Policy

In the interim, while longer term measures such as new legislation are being considered, the province needs to prepare a revised provincial land use strategy or Policy Statement dealing with agricultural land protection.

- 3.7 A revised provincial land use strategy or policy on agricultural land to replace the outdated Food Land Guidelines is needed. It would assist in providing direction to municipalities, developers and the public on criteria to be considered when proposing to convert agricultural land to other uses.

Municipal Official Plans

Municipal Official Plans should be the primary planning document containing strong agricultural land protection policies.

The Countryside Working Group recommends that municipal Official Plans must be prepared, and at a minimum, include the following:

- 3.8 priority agricultural areas be identified and designated on land use schedules;
- 3.9 strong policies on agricultural land protection be developed to give farmers and others security for long term use;
- 3.10 delineate adequate urban growth boundaries based on appropriate population projections over a 20 year time frame;
- 3.11 policies that require municipalities or the proponent to justify the need for urbanization of agricultural land;
- 3.12 policies to assess the potential impacts of urban expansion on the remaining farm and agricultural service enterprises;
- 3.13 policies to restrict severance activity;
- 3.14 policies to restrict estate residential development;
- 3.15 policies to direct growth in the Countryside to identified settlement areas;
- 3.16 a moratorium on severances and site specific official plan amendments for development on agricultural land until regional official plans are in place.

The following urban strategies be included in municipal Official Plans which:

- 3.17 emphasize intensification and re-development of existing urban areas;
- 3.18 increase densities in redeveloped, proposed, and new urban areas;
- 3.19 consider urban expansion only as part of a comprehensive review of urban land requirements and only during the five year review period for regional official plans, this is within the context of the 20 year time frame for delineated urban boundaries;
- 3.20 ensure urban expansion be limited to lands contiguous to existing urban areas.

The following Countryside growth strategies should be included in municipal Official Plans:

- 3.21 direct any development in the Countryside to designated growth centres and rural service centres;

- 3.22 limit the expansion of clustered development in agricultural areas;
- 3.23 prohibit scattered development in agricultural areas.

Information/Education

There is a need to increase awareness about the importance of the agricultural land resource and the agri-food industry in Ontario and to improve agricultural techniques and practices to safeguard the environment.

An increased emphasis on education and information transfer for both the farming community and the general public is an important method of protecting the agricultural land resource base and the environment. The Countryside Working Group recommends that:

- 3.24 An agricultural education and information program should be established by the province, in co-operation with the regional municipalities. Demonstration farms such as the one operated by the Peel Board of Education are an extremely effective means to promote the importance and value of agriculture to the public and educate the farming community in the areas of soil conservation and stewardship.
- 3.25 Farmers and the public should be encouraged to have a greater awareness of the value of conservation agriculture and the stewardship role of farmers. This must be supported by technical advice and assistance to farmers through increased attention to proactive extension and demonstration programs.
- 3.26 Develop a rural land data base to update soil surveys, agricultural land use systems mapping, and statistics on agricultural land and farming activities.

Economic Vitality

The economic vitality of the agri-food industry will have to be improved if the industry is going to survive in the long term, and if it is to continue to play an important role in the rural economy.

The Countryside Working Group recognizes that the long term protection of our agricultural land base is dependent upon the economics of farming. It is recommended that:

- 3.27 The Federal and Provincial government develop programs and partnerships which foster an economic climate in which agriculture can compete, thus providing an incentive for agriculture to remain in the GTA and throughout the province;
- 3.28 An interministerial committee, with municipal involvement, be established to develop a strategy on the marketing of local produce in the urban areas of the GTA.

CHAPTER 4 TOURISM AND RECREATION

BACKGROUND - THE IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF TOURISM AND RECREATION

The functions of tourism and recreation in the Countryside represent complex arrangements of public and private services which offer a range of benefits for the Countryside as well as the urban areas. There is probably no aspect of the Countryside in which the interdependence and linkages between the Countryside and the urban areas are more prevalent and taken for granted, than with tourism and recreation. It is essential that both the urban areas and the Countryside are permitted to contribute their own personalities to an overall GTA tourism and recreation experience.

The Countryside serves and is served by tourism and recreation opportunities in the GTA. The Countryside provides and receives benefits, sometimes by design, but often without deliberate intention. For example: use of a Conservation Area provides social benefits as families recreate together, building a stronger foundation for society; at the same time, personal benefits are gained by individuals experiencing rest and relaxation or outdoor physical activity; while direct and indirect economic benefits are realized as local services are used by people visiting the Conservation Authority Area. Further examples of social benefits can be found in the development of friendships beyond borders and cultures, the learning of skills and values transferable to other aspects of life, the integration of disadvantaged members of society, etc..

Recreation, being defined as "all those things a person or group chooses to do in order to make leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable and more satisfying", offers a host of personal benefits including: growth and development through children's play, a sense of leading a balanced life, development of self esteem and a positive self image, the formation of leadership skills, a sense of fair play, and much more. Economic benefits are derived from both the tourism and the recreation resources. For the most part, the economic impact of recreation is derived from direct expenditures in the sports and fitness industry; however, indirect economic benefits are also realized through a fitter, healthier workforce, health cost savings by reducing lifestyle related diseases, and reduction of other social costs. Tourism generates substantial economic impacts through visitor expenditures for automobile and public transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment and retail shopping.

The Countryside is in a position to contribute unique experiences from those found in urban areas. People seek out the Countryside to enjoy natural settings, the rural culture, country inns, scenic drives, and generally experiences which contrast with the fast-paced, high-tech, stressful conditions in urban areas. Equally, countryside residents are lured to urban areas to enjoy the excitement and variety offered there. Through this quest for balance, we find the strength for linkages and interdependence between urban areas and the Countryside and the need for both to exist as individual entities in the vision for the GTA.

PROBLEMS/ISSUES

There are many problems and issues related to tourism and recreation in the Countryside of the GTA:

- Expectations of urban recreational facilities such as arenas or pools by Countryside residents are not always affordable or realistic;
- Not all municipalities have recreation Master Plans and municipalities that have master recreation plans don't always implement them, often due to the costs of preparing and implementing such plans;

- Municipal tourism/recreation master planning (where it exists) does not address the intermunicipal or GTA focus;
- There is pressure to permit large, land consumptive attractions in the Countryside.

OBJECTIVES FOR TOURISM AND RECREATION

The Countryside Working Group has identified the following objectives for tourism and recreation:

- Develop tourism and recreational opportunities compatible with the personality and character of the Countryside.
- Foster a dynamic and economically viable tourism sector that meets the demands of international, Canadian and Ontario consumers for high quality and diverse experiences.
- Provide a diversity of recreational activities and opportunities which would allow individual freedom of choice based on personal needs and interests.
- Encourage a range of recreational activities which would be emotionally, psychologically, socially and intellectually enriching.

STRATEGIES

The Countryside Working Group recommends the following:

Municipal Official Plans

- 4.1 Regional Official Plans should include recreation and tourism as a part of the planning process.
- 4.2 Municipal Official Plans contain policies which direct high impact tourism and recreation development to urban areas.

Provincial Direction/Policy

- 4.3 Develop mechanisms to help municipalities form partnerships to provide and manage interjurisdictional recreation resources.
- 4.4 Package the GTA with its Countryside as an attractive tourist destination, along with the consideration of the potential for ecotourism.
- 4.5 Support land stewardship approaches to maximize public access to open space resources.

Municipal Direction/Policy

- 4.6 Encourage low impact tourism and recreation development which is compatible with the natural and cultural resources of the Countryside.
- 4.7 Match recreation and tourism services and development to the function and character of settlement areas.
- 4.8 Identify and promote local strengths and address local weaknesses in tourism and recreation at the regional and municipal level.

- 4.9 Establish new recreation and tourist facilities only after consideration of potential impacts on the natural and cultural heritage of the Countryside.
- 4.10 Locate new recreation and tourist facilities primarily within Settlement Areas, except where natural terrain or special requirements are associated with specific uses.

TRAILS

BACKGROUND - THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAILS

Trails are a very visible feature which can create important linkages between the Countryside and urban areas. Demographic shifts and greater environmental awareness have created leisure trends which indicate an increased interest in linear recreational activities such as walking, cycling and cross country skiing. These trends create a demand for a variety of trails throughout the GTA.

The Countryside Working Group has identified three categories of trails:

Recreational Trails - this category includes both single activity trails and multi-purpose trails. They primarily promote a variety of modes of physical movement from one location to another. ie. walking, hiking, cycling, skiing, riding, etc. They often connect points of interest or lead to specific tourism and recreation destinations. Examples of recreational trails in the GTA include: the Seneca College Nordic Ski Centre at King City and the Bruce Trail from Inglewood to Palgrave in the Town of Caledon.

Nature Trails - these types of trails promote contact with natural settings and are based on interests related to environmental awareness i.e. nature study, bird watching, ecotourism. Many examples of these trails can be found on conservation authority lands.

Scenic/Historic Trails - these kind of trails can be pedestrian and/or auto oriented. They include historic footpaths and auto routes which often pass through scenic or historic cultural and natural landscapes.

Within the GTA, most of the public open space suitable for trail use is found in or adjacent to the river valleys and waterfront corridors. Other public open spaces can be found in the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges Moraine, Conservation Authority Lands, regional forests in York and Durham, and abandoned railway corridors. There are two notable trail systems running north-south on either side of the GTA; at the western edge is the Bruce Trail, and just outside the eastern boundary of the GTA, the Ganaraska Trail. The Oak Ridges Moraine could provide the backbone for an east-west trail connecting the Bruce and Ganaraska Trails. Since the Oak Ridges Moraine is the source of the major rivers in the GTA, it would provide the ideal link to trails along all of the major river valleys flowing north to Lake Simcoe and south to Lake Ontario.

The proposed Waterfront Trail along the Lake Ontario shoreline connecting the Bruce and Ganaraska Trails would serve as another east-west connector. The multipurpose Waterfront Trail with components of all three trail types will ultimately extend from Burlington to Newcastle linking natural and cultural heritage elements, and urban areas. The trail will be designed for recreation and as a corridor for those who prefer to cycle or walk.

To make trails fully accessible, the above skeletal structure for an inter-connected multipurpose trail system would need to be enhanced by the development of a system of local connectors which branch deeply into urban areas and countryside settlements.

The Interministerial Committee on Alternative Uses of Abandoned Rights of Way is comprised of representatives from 13 provincial ministries. The committee is charged with the responsibility of both articulating the provincial interest in abandoned railways and establishing an effective means of disposal, which recognizes and accommodates appropriate alternative uses. The committee will guide the identification and acquisition of those abandoned rail lines which offer significant public opportunities and benefits for one or more post-railway uses. There are approximately eleven abandoned railway rights of way in the GTA, which could provide further opportunities for trails.

LINKAGES

Two types of linkages are noteworthy. The first deals with linkages within a trails network or system; and the second deals with linkages between the trails network and the location of potential users of the trails. Both are important in order to connect recreational and cultural resources; urban and rural communities; to allow human access to nature; to increase the use and accessibility of existing parks and natural areas; to preserve plant and animal communities; to create economic activity at trail access points; and to encourage local trail development initiatives.

PROBLEMS/ISSUES IN ESTABLISHING TRAILS

The following problems/issues have been determined by the Countryside Working Group:

- There is a lack of leadership and interjurisdictional coordination for establishing a GTA wide trail system.
- Municipalities generally do not consider the acquisition of parkland for linear trails as a priority. The traditional focus of park land dedication on nodal parks creates isolated spaces as opposed to linear interconnected systems which makes it difficult to create trails on public lands.
- The use of cash-in-lieu provisions of the Planning Act for parkland dedication creates inequities in park locations. In addition, the Act contains no provisions for a municipality to identify the type or location of lands to be dedicated.
- Current legal requirements make it difficult for non-profit groups to use land stewardship techniques, particularly land trusts and conservation easements.
- There is no clear responsibility for construction and maintenance of trails.
- There is a lack of public funds for acquiring abandoned railway lines.

OBJECTIVES FOR TRAILS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The following objectives have been determined by the Countryside Working Group:

- Provide for a range of trail experiences and opportunities in the Countryside for all residents of the GTA.
- Promote greater awareness of the value and diversity of the Countryside through the use of trails.
- Create a comprehensive linked trail network throughout the GTA.

STRATEGIES FOR IDENTIFYING AND SECURING TRAILS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

To create a GTA wide trail network the Countryside Working Group recommends:

Legislation

- 4.11 The Planning Act should be amended to increase the amount and specify the nature of land required through the statutory parkland dedication. This will enable trail creation and linkages where trails cannot be part of the greenlands system.
- 4.12 The Province should provide enabling legislation to make it easier for non-profit groups to hold easements as outlined in the Greenlands section.

Provincial Direction/Policy

- 4.13 The Province provide leadership in the development of a GTA wide trail plan.
- 4.14 The Province should negotiate with the railways to establish a hierarchy for the disposition of abandoned railways: to first offer them to the Province, then to municipalities, then to organizations involved in the creation of trails, and then to the abutting owners.

Municipal Direction/Policy

- 4.15 Municipalities should include trails in their Recreation Master Plans.

Community-Based Involvement

- 4.16 Community-based involvement both by organizations and individuals is essential for the successful development of a trail network in the GTA and must extend not only to the implementation of the trails strategy but also to the longer term creation and maintenance of trails.

Agency Coordination

- 4.17 The province should establish a multi-agency committee composed of regional, municipal, provincial, conservation authority and non-government organization representatives to coordinate the planning and implementation of an interregional trails system in the GTA. This committee could identify an overall trail system which regional and local governments would include in Official Plans. If the Province established the major trail framework then the individual municipalities can identify the connecting trails through and in their municipalities.

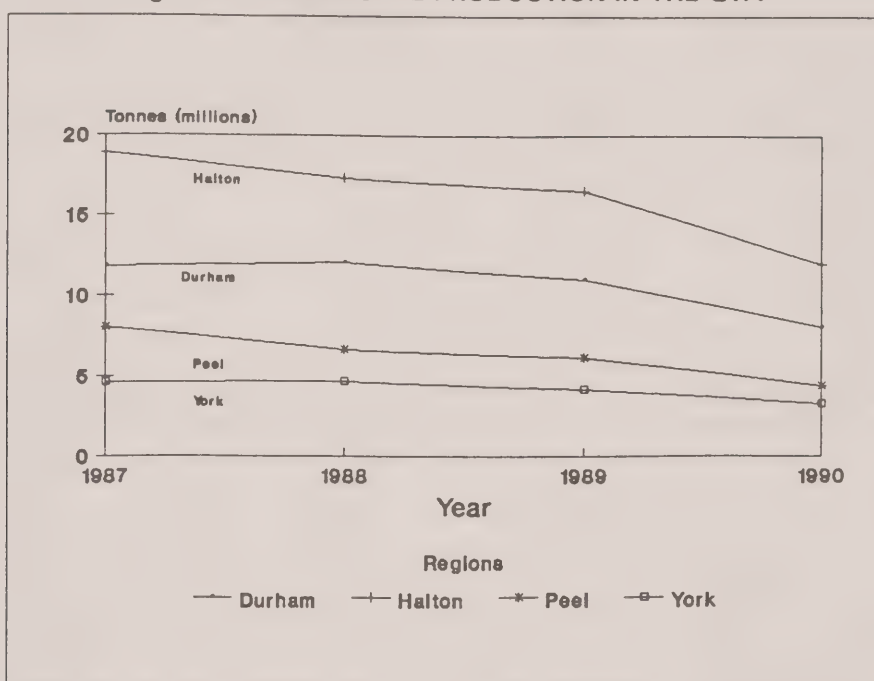
CHAPTER 5 RESOURCE RELATED LAND USES - AGGREGATES

BACKGROUND

Aggregates are an essential commodity. Of the 40.3 million tonnes of aggregate consumed in the GTA in 1990, only 27.8 million tonnes were produced in the GTA. The GTA used 25 percent of all Ontario aggregates produced in 1990, and 26 percent in 1989.

The Provincial government and municipalities are the major users of aggregates, utilizing 60 percent of all aggregates produced in the Province for infrastructure maintenance and construction. The consumption of aggregates in Ontario has been rising in recent years from 14 tonnes per capita in 1980 to 18 tonnes per capita in 1986, and 21 tonnes per capita in 1989. In comparison the consumption of aggregates in the GTA has remained steady at approximately 10 tonnes per capita over the same time period.

Figure 5 - AGGREGATE PRODUCTION IN THE GTA



The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) generated by mineral aggregate extraction in Ontario fell from a high of \$216 million in 1987 to only \$139 million in 1990.

The Aggregate Resources Act of 1990 replaced the Pits and Quarries Control Act to regulate the aggregate extraction industry in Ontario. The new Act places more emphasis on progressive rehabilitation of sites, and on minimizing some of the adverse impacts by way of improved site plans.

Provincially as of 1990, just over 80,000 ha of land were licensed for extraction. Of the 20,000 ha of disturbed land - most of it will remain disturbed while extraction is still ongoing. However, during 1989 and 1990, close to 700 ha of disturbed land were rehabilitated. With progressive rehabilitation, more and more areas will be rehabilitated. Currently there are no statistical means

available to assess the effectiveness of rehabilitation measures based on targets against which rehabilitation efforts could be evaluated.

Although aggregate resource extraction is considered to be an interim land use, many operations continue for decades before the site is rehabilitated to a final land use.

Aggregate producers are required to create a new landscape equal to or better than the one that existed prior to the removal of aggregate. Examples of rehabilitated sites within the GTA include:

- Halton Crushed Stone - Milton (wildlife habitat)
- John Clarke Property - Caledon (reforestation)
- Guy Cole Property - East Gwillimbury (agriculture)
- Smyth Park - Metropolitan Toronto (recreation)

A portion of the demand for aggregates in the GTA is met through the reclamation and recycling of asphalt, construction materials, slag and fly ash. In 1990, approximately 11 million tonnes of this material were diverted from landfill sites throughout Ontario, and recycling processes recovered 5.9 million tonnes of aggregate for reuse. That year the GTA used 1.7 million tonnes of this recycled material, to satisfy approximately 4 percent of its aggregate demands. Recycled aggregate is not expected to make a major contribution to future aggregate needs as most aggregate is incorporated into structures and facilities of a permanent nature.

PROBLEMS/ISSUES

The following problems/issues were identified by the Countryside Working Group:

- The Mineral Aggregate Resources Policy Statement (MARPS) requires Official Plans to include policies to protect aggregate resources. There is some concern that existing Official Plan policies are inadequate to manage aggregate reserves in the GTA. Only a few Official Plans identify high potential aggregate deposits. The continued availability of a range of aggregate products is not ensured, and resource lands are not always protected from constraints placed on them by adjacent land uses.
- Many of the valuable aggregate resource areas in the GTA, are located on the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine. These areas have significant cultural and natural heritage, and environmental values which must be balanced with aggregate extraction.
- The proposed revisions to the Niagara Escarpment Plan, restricting extraction in most of the plan area will undoubtedly put more pressure on other resource areas in the GTA such as the Oak Ridges Moraine.
- Rehabilitation costs, especially in the GTA, are very high because there is a demand for sophisticated after-use such as recreation, parks, etc.
- Some operators continue to update licences or extract negligible amounts of aggregate from licensed reserves to avoid costly rehabilitation.
- The public perception on the rehabilitation of pits and quarries is that the work has either not been done or that the results have been less than desirable, which further reinforces the bias against extraction.

- Lack of information about the cumulative impact of aggregate extraction particularly in those areas where extraction activities are concentrated.
- It is difficult to start a new aggregate operation in the GTA because the public views aggregate operations as an obnoxious and disruptive land use.
- The additional truck traffic associated with aggregate extraction not only hastens the deterioration of roads routes but also causes problems with noise and dust for residents along haul routes.
- The revenue generated from the tonnage levy is often considered inadequate to cover wear costs associated with aggregate truck movement on local and regional roads.

OBJECTIVES

Aggregates are a valuable and necessary resource and are a key component of the GTA's economy. The location of these resources is beyond our control, having been predetermined by glacial and post glacial activity.

Many people consider aggregate extraction to be an undesirable land use with many negative social, economic and environmental impacts. In recognition of these conflicting values, the following objectives have been identified for aggregate resources in the GTA.

- Wisely manage existing and potential resource areas to ensure minimal impacts on surrounding lands while protecting the natural environment from any adverse effects.
- Identify resource protection areas in official plans where extraction can occur.
- Minimize environmental impacts by conducting all extraction and processing in a manner which has the least detrimental effects to the environment, particularly with respect to both surface and groundwater resources.
- Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas, woodlands, regional greenland networks, and headwater and recharge areas, by prohibiting extraction within these areas.
- Recover, recycle, and reuse aggregates whenever possible.
- Rehabilitate back to agriculture those licensed aggregate operations that are located on class 1, 2, and 3 agricultural soils.
- Rehabilitate back to a natural state where one existed prior to extraction.

STRATEGIES

Municipal Official Plans

Municipal official plans should identify and protect aggregate resource extraction areas and include policies for the long term rehabilitation of these areas. Municipal Official Plans should contain policies which ensure that aggregate extraction has the least possible environmental and social impact.

The Countryside Working Group recommends that:

- 5.1 Resource protection areas be identified in the GTA for the next 50 years (provided the resource is geologically or economically suitable) based on MNR mapping in the Aggregate Resource Inventory Paper reports.
- 5.2 Regional Official Plans identify, and designate, aggregate resource protection areas for the next 20 years (where the resources are geologically and economically suitable). Extraction outside these areas would be prohibited during this period.
- 5.3 Regional and local Official Plans should include policies such that high potential aggregate lands are not fragmented by development and that incompatible uses are discouraged.
- 5.4 A municipal wide rehabilitation strategy (or master plan) consistent with existing or proposed land use designations, be developed which all operators would be required to reflect in their individual rehabilitation plans, particularly in areas with multiple extraction operators.

Provincial/Municipal Policy

The Countryside Working Group recommends that:

- 5.5 Provincial, regional, and municipal targets be established for the amount of recycled aggregate material is to be used in the construction of capital works projects such as roads and sewer beds.
- 5.6 The province should consider increasing the tonnage levy to better reflect municipal road maintenance costs.
- 5.7 More research into technology required to increase the use of recycled aggregates be undertaken.
- 5.8 Alternatives to the use of aggregates be investigated (i.e. non-recyclable glass and ceramics, other materials currently in the waste stream).
- 5.9 Methodologies be developed to assess the effectiveness of rehabilitation measures.
- 5.10 Methodologies be developed to assess the cumulative impacts of aggregate extraction.
- 5.11 MNR update the Aggregate Resource Inventory Paper reports which provide the basis for municipal Official Plan policies to protect Aggregate Resource Areas.

CHAPTER 6 COUNTRYSIDE COMMUNITIES

The influence of urban values and pressures has increased within the GTA Countryside. This trend is perhaps best illustrated when the ratio of non-farm versus farm population is considered (see Table 3).

Table 3 - RATIO OF RURAL NON-FARM TO FARM POPULATION IN THE GTA (1989)

<u>Region</u>	<u>Non-Farm/Farm</u>	<u>Percent of Regional Population which is Rural Non-Farm</u>
Durham	8/1	16.6
York	12/1	11.2
Peel	30/1	12.4
Halton	11/1	10.2
GTA (outside Metro)	13/1	12.6
GTA (including Metro)		5.4

The existence of a large non-farm rural population creates pressures on resources and natural areas and creates the potential for conflicts between uses at the "Rural/Urban Interface".

The term "Rural/Urban Interface" has been defined in various ways over the years. It assumes that there is an identifiable rural area and an equally defined urban area. Factors that help in understanding such areas include physical/biological characteristics; land uses; economic function; and, social structure/relationships.

The most visible aspect of the Rural/Urban Interface is the development of urban land uses and their associated standards, within rural areas. This includes the establishment of settlement areas, estate-residential developments and commercial and industrial development, all of which have some impact on the role and the function of the Countryside as a whole. There is also a less visible aspect of the Rural/Urban Interface which includes the different values and expectations of the urban transplants and the long term Countryside residents.

While it is recognized that the Countryside requires settlement areas and commercial and industrial development to ensure a balanced community, direction is needed to specify where and how much urban growth should occur to minimize impacts such as:

- impacts on natural and cultural heritage;
- increased local costs versus tax revenue benefits;
- increased cost for infrastructure (e.g. highways, schools & busing, hospitals, social services, etc.);
- social impacts;
- intangibles (social structure, attitudes/conflicts);
- fragmentation of agricultural lands.

All levels of government must provide stability at the rural/urban interface by ensuring coordinated, consistent and clearly articulated long term planning policies which are not subject to constant change.

Any strategy to address these or emerging rural/urban interface issues must take the form of a holistic planning approach. In this broader context, the interrelationship between urban and rural area policies should become clear. All three levels of planning jurisdiction must coordinate the planning policy response.

SETTLEMENT AREAS

BACKGROUND

Existing settlement areas play an important role as the focal point for residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and community activity within the GTA Countryside. Many of the Countryside settlement areas have a historical background and a heritage value that represents a strong cultural link to the early settlers of the area. Existing settlements within the GTA Countryside include small unserviced communities, such as villages and hamlets, and larger, fully serviced or partially serviced communities which have higher order commercial, recreational, and institutional functions.

The expectations for these communities and their functions as rural settlements needs to be clearly defined in the context of the overall Countryside principles identified in the introduction to this report.

PROBLEMS/ISSUES

The problems/issues identified by the Countryside Working Group concerning settlement areas in the Countryside are:

- The policies and mechanisms available to maintain the economic and social vitality of settlements in the Countryside need to be ascertained.
- The current roles of the various types of settlement areas within the Countryside need to be established.
- There are problems associated with the provision of private services. There is a need to address the cumulative impact of privately serviced development on the environment.
- Many settlement areas with municipal services are reaching capacity.
- There are significant economic, environmental, and social implications of extending urban services to settlements in the Countryside.
- Private servicing requirements result in larger new lots which are not compatible with the character of existing settlement areas.

OBJECTIVES

In recognition of the need to provide direction for the growth and development of settlement areas, the Countryside Working Group identified the following key objectives:

- Strengthen and foster the heritage and economic vitality of settlements in the Countryside.
- Provide focal points of living and employment activity within the Countryside.

STRATEGIES

Municipal Official Plans

Settlement areas should be the focus for growth and development activity in the Countryside. Regional official plans should identify a hierarchy of settlement areas based on a community's present and future role and its suitability for growth from environmental, social and economic perspectives.

The Countryside Working Group recommends that:

6.1 All regional municipalities should have approved Official Plans.

6.2 Regional Official Plans should establish a hierarchy for settlements as follows:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Growth Centres | ● | Primary focus for the majority of new residential and employment growth as well as the provision of goods and services for the Countryside. These settlements generally will be developed on full municipal services or as technology develops, by alternative systems. |
| Rural Service Centres | ● | Existing settlements which are primarily residential in nature, usually focused on a small historic commercial core. Growth in Rural Service Centres will generally be restricted to developments which are related to, or service, the surrounding rural economy. Each centre is generally serviced by municipal water supply. |
| Hamlets | ● | Existing settlements with a cluster of homes. Hamlets will have limited growth and commercial uses. Hamlets generally will be serviced by private wells and private sewage disposal systems. |

6.3 Regional Official Plans should evaluate settlement areas based on servicing potential, environmental and social impacts. Development should only be permitted in those settlements which have been determined to be suitable for further growth.

6.4 Regional and local Official Plans formulate strategies for the development of compact settlement areas.

- 6.5 Local official plans should clearly establish the boundaries, size, growth rate, development phasing, and uses within settlements.
- 6.6 The growth of settlement areas in the Countryside must only take place as part of a comprehensive review of all such areas, their roles, and a justification of the need for expansion within the context of a regional Official Plan.

Environmental Considerations:

The impact of settlement area growth and development on the natural and cultural environment, including cumulative impacts, must be a primary consideration.

The Countryside Working Group recommends that:

- 6.7 The essentially open character of the Countryside, including agricultural and natural areas, shall be the guiding value in considering other functions for settlement areas.
- 6.8 Growth of settlements should occur with careful consideration of the potential effects on the natural and cultural heritage environments.
- 6.9 Designated settlements should be the predominant location for development in the Countryside and this should be reinforced by firm local, regional, and provincial policies to prevent scattered development.

Servicing

Regional municipalities should undertake a comprehensive review of the current servicing capacity, servicing constraints, and servicing potential in all existing settlement areas.

The Countryside Working Group recommends that:

- 6.10 Broad-based hydrogeological studies should be required prior to continued growth and development of settlement areas on private services.
- 6.11 The potential for improved technology for private septic systems and communal water and sewer servicing systems should be examined by the Ministry of Environment with regard to types of systems, feasibility, technical merits, and the responsibility for operation and maintenance.
- 6.12 The size of settlement should be related to, but not necessarily dictated by, the method of servicing.

SCATTERED RURAL RESIDENCES

BACKGROUND

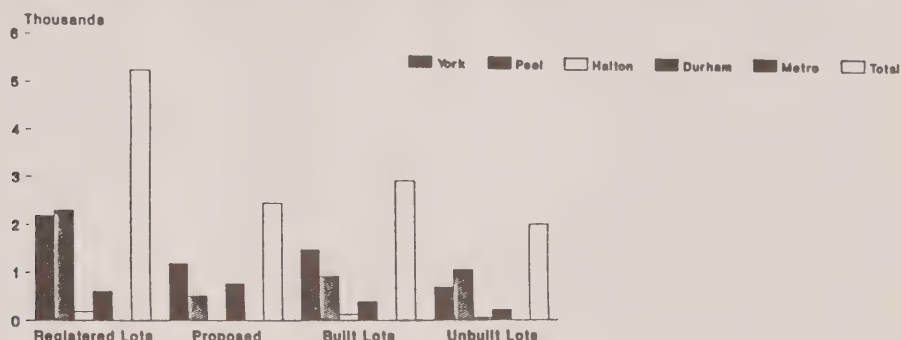
Scattered rural residences refers to severance and estate lots. There tend to be reasonably consistent and strong policies regulating scattered rural residences contained within the Official Plans of municipalities within the GTA where they are permitted.

There has been a strong effort in the past 10 - 15 years to protect prime agricultural land in the (CLI classes 1-4). Generally municipal estate residential policies exclude good agricultural land from the areas suitable for estate residential development.

A preliminary inventory of estate residential lots revealed that there are currently in excess of 5000 registered estate residential lots within the Countryside of the GTA. These lots have tended to focus on environmentally sensitive areas such as forested areas, adjacent to stream valleys, and in scenic rolling areas. The concentration of such lots in environmentally sensitive areas has been the result of provincial and municipal policies which by default direct estate residential subdivisions to these areas.

Although there is no information on absorption capacity within the real estate market for estate residential lots, information obtained by the Countryside Working Group indicates that of the over 5000 registered lots available in the GTA, approximately 3000 are built on, leaving 2000 registered vacant lots. These lots have been created over a time frame of approximately 20 years. An additional 2400 lots have been proposed throughout the GTA. Seen within this context, the current demand for estate-residential lots is perhaps less than what might be initially perceived. These homes are no doubt bought and sold as market conditions dictate and according to owners' life style changes.

Figure 6 - ESTATE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE GTA



PROBLEMS/ISSUES

The following problems/issues were identified regarding estate residential development:

- Scenic natural areas such as the Oak Ridges Moraine tend to have lighter, more sandy soils with steeper grades which make the areas less attractive for farming. Areas such as the Oak Ridges Moraine, however, have the requisite scenic, rolling areas with broad vistas, and forested areas to which policies direct estate residential development.
- Decisions permitting scattered rural residential developments by local, regional and provincial governments have failed to take into account the proximity of each development to others. While one development may be "small scale", ten small scale developments can create a concentration which was never envisaged by any of the policies.
- The concept of cumulative effects has only recently been discussed relative to septic systems and their effect on ground water. In the past, it was held that, with sufficiently large lots, septic systems could continue to be a permanent method of sewage disposal for

estate residential and severance lots. More recent evidence suggests that this may not be the case. We do not, however, have a definitive means of predicting such cumulative impacts.

- Scattered rural residential uses are extremely land consumptive due to the large lots required for the proper operation of private septic systems.
- No definitive work has been completed to determine the cost of scattered rural residential lots to the various levels of government (e.g. garbage pick-up, fire protection) and to school boards (e.g. busing costs). There is a perception that since municipal water and sewer are not supplied to these lots, the high values of the homes and, their assessment and property tax represents a lucrative form of income for municipalities.
- Once estate residential lots have been developed, the residents generally place pressure on Council for services such as schools, better road networks, sewage, and water supply for both domestic and fire fighting purposes, especially in developments adjacent to fully serviced areas. The additional burden of local improvement lot levies to provide higher levels of servicing can make the costs for long term residents too high to maintain their previous lifestyle.
- Where scattered rural residences occur adjacent to fully serviced areas, a disruption to the rural/urban fringe occurs making normal expansion of that settlement area difficult both in the integration of the lot pattern, and urban form with respect to servicing.
- While the current policies on estate residential development all require that landscape and engineering studies be carried out in support of individual applications, there is no single administrative body or agency which does a comprehensive analysis of such documentation, nor which reviews the cumulative impact of all applications.
- The social and environmental implications of widely scattered, and perhaps isolated rural residential developments are difficult to quantify, however, the policing, fire protection and educational costs are known to be high.

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives were identified regarding scattered rural residences:

- Direct non-farm rural residential and other development, to established and defined settlement areas.
- Curtail urban sprawl such as scattered rural residences until a complete understanding of the cumulative environmental, social and economic impacts is known.
- Protect the rural environment from the intrusion of incompatible rural residential uses which lead to demands for urban services (e.g. municipal sewer and water services).

STRATEGIES

Severely restrict the development of further scattered rural residences until more is known about the true environmental, social and economic costs associated with this form of development.

The Countryside Working Group recommends that:

- 6.13 The provincial government in consultation with local governments develop an understanding of cumulative impacts and the means of measuring these impacts. In support of this, consideration should be given to a moratorium on the creation of estate residential lots until more is known about demands as well as cumulative impacts.
- 6.14 Official Plans should address estate residential as part of the Countryside settlement policies and require that each application for Official Plan Amendment include a comprehensive analysis of estate residential needs and demands, including an inventory of existing lots built and unbuilt and the proximity and status of other similar proposals. Policies should also require that an analysis of cumulative impacts be provided.
- 6.15 The Province should conduct a comprehensive study to examine the true social, economic, and environmental costs of scattered rural residential development.
- 6.16 Develop a data base on rural residential lots to provide a clear understanding of the status of existing lot inventories.
- 6.17 Private serviced estate residential development should not be permitted adjacent to serviced settlement areas.

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL

BACKGROUND

Existing commercial/industrial areas within the GTA Countryside are either part of settlement areas; private or communally serviced industrial parks along transportation routes (not necessarily related to settlement areas); or they take the form of scattered industrial/commercial uses, i.e. garden centres, building supply. The locations of these scattered uses are sometimes dictated by the nature of the business.

Key factors in selecting industrial locations include price and availability of land/buildings; property taxes; accessibility to roads; local bylaws and approval processes; proximity to home; and proximity to customers and clients.

Commercial and industrial development is an important economic activity which enhances a municipality's tax base and provides a source of employment within the Countryside.

PROBLEMS/ISSUES

The following problems/issues were identified by the Countryside Working Group:

- It is difficult to attract commercial/industrial businesses without full municipal services. For example in areas without municipal water, communal wells are required in order to have reasonable fire insurance rates.
- Less desirable industries tend to locate in the Countryside due to lower land costs and extensive land requirements.

- Over-designation of commercial/industrial land in inappropriate locations (ie. isolated, unserviceable, not served by adequate transportation) results in areas of vacant, non-productive land.

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives were identified by the Countryside Working Group:

- Support and provide opportunities for enhancing the economic vitality of settlement areas within the Countryside.
- Provide a stable economic base in the Countryside to improve the live/work relationship and decrease the necessity for commuting.
- Promote commercial/industrial uses that are compatible with, and supportive of, the rural economy, environment and society.
- Encourage a balance of population and employment in the Countryside. As a guide, a healthy community should have 50 jobs for every 100 residents.
- Encourage Countryside residents to spend a larger portion of their income on goods and services available in the Countryside.

STRATEGIES

Commercial and industrial activity should be focused on settlement areas to foster an important component of a healthy, diverse and vital Countryside and to enhance the quality of life and the live/work relationship of rural residents.

The Countryside Working Group recommends that:

- 6.18 Regional Official Plans provide policies to guide and direct commercial/industrial growth to settlement areas and to prohibit scattered commercial/industrial development. Growth should primarily be directed to Growth Areas and Rural Service Centres, with limited growth in industrial parks.
- 6.19 Regional and local official plans identify, through land use designations, a sufficient amount of commercial and industrial land, based on population projections for the region and an acceptable residential/employment ratio over a 20 year time frame.
- 6.20 Scattered existing commercial/industrial uses which are producing adverse environmental impacts should not be permitted to expand until these sites are rehabilitated. Other existing uses may be allowed minor expansions following a consideration of need, compatibility and environmental impacts.
- 6.21 The re-development of abandoned commercial/industrial land be considered following an assessment of need, compatibility and environmental impacts of the new use proposed.
- 6.22 The possibility of tax sharing or equalization within a region, where commercial/industrial development is limited to certain local municipalities for a variety of reasons should be investigated.

OTHER LAND USE ISSUES

There are several additional types of land uses which tend to locate within the Countryside. It seems that many land uses which are deemed to be undesirable, but necessary, focus on the Countryside. This is usually as result of lower land costs in the Countryside and due to the "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) attitude. Waste disposal sites and car wrecking yards are two examples of uses which are perceived to be "undesirable". In order to deal with these land uses, any proposed use of this type must meet all of the environment-related recommendations which have been outlined in previous chapters of this report. In addition, the need for these facilities should be clearly established. It is recognized that waste disposal sites are subject to all of the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act.

TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITY CORRIDORS

BACKGROUND

Transportation and utility corridors can be defined as lands which are used, or proposed, for highways, rail lines, electric power transmission lines, oil and natural gas pipelines, water supply and sewage pipes, communication lines, and transit lines. Transportation and utility corridors are used to link urban areas with each other and with areas outside the GTA by providing space for the movement of goods, energy, and information. The undeveloped areas of the Countryside are often seen as the path of least resistance for the selection of new corridors, however it is recognized that nodal urban form will require effective links which will go through the Countryside.

PROBLEMS/ISSUES

The problems/issues associated with transportation and utility corridors are:

- The construction of transportation and utility corridors impacts natural and cultural heritage values.
- Visual impact of utility corridors on the aesthetics of the Countryside (particularly hydro transmission lines).
- Corridors which cross through agricultural areas can require farmers to alter their farm management practices and disrupt farm activities (i.e. restrictions on the use of spray irrigation near hydro transmission lines).
- There is a negative public perception associated with living near utility corridors.
- There is a lack of coordinated long term planning for transportation and utility corridors in the Countryside.

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives were identified by the Countryside Working Group:

- Minimize adverse environmental impacts caused in supplying and using energy (ie. utility corridors and energy generating facilities).
- Locate transportation corridors such that aesthetic, cultural and natural heritage values are protected.
- Encourage and ensure the conservation and wise use of energy.
- Guide development and transportation services to ensure that energy consumption is kept to a minimum.

STRATEGIES

The Countryside Working Group recommends that:

- 6.23 Agencies responsible for transportation and utilities be required to undertake coordinated long term planning programs for identifying the need for, and location of, utility corridors in the Countryside.
- 6.24 Multi-use utility corridors be developed.
- 6.25 A transportation and utility corridor infrastructure strategy be developed.
- 6.26 Natural species landscapes be implemented as an alternative to herbicide control in utility corridors, where feasible.
- 6.27 Inter and intra regional transit systems be developed.
- 6.28 Transportation modes which minimize environmental impacts and land use conflicts be promoted.
- 6.29 Municipalities participate in discussions on energy-related facilities which could affect the Countryside.
- 6.30 The energy consumption of private and public undertakings in the Countryside be determined and that the results of this assessment be incorporated into the evaluation of development proposals.
- 6.31 Development be designed to conserve energy through street layouts and the siting of buildings for proper sun and wind orientation.
- 6.32 Appropriate energy conservation measures which can be incorporated into buildings through design, construction, internal climate control equipment, solar access and landscaping be promoted.

CHAPTER 7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

To ensure that the GTA continues to be a healthy community and in order to realize the vision of the GTA in 2021, a sound relationship between the Countryside and urban areas must be negotiated to form the essence of a sustainable GTA. Therefore the Countryside Working Group has identified three guiding principles which should form the basis of this new relationship. These principles are:

- the Countryside is a distinct and valuable entity which contributes to the overall quality of life in the GTA;
- much greater attention must be given to addressing issues and problems in the Countryside in order to protect and enhance its unique character, values and functions; and,
- greenlands and agricultural lands are critical to the long term social, economic and environmental health of the entire GTA and must be actively protected for the future.

These guiding principles provided the basis for developing the strategies and recommendations contained in the Countryside Working Group Report. The individual recommendations play an integral part in forming the whole strategy for the Countryside. This strategy forms what can be described as a holistic approach, and represents a new planning approach and a new attitude towards the Countryside.

Natural and cultural heritage systems need much stronger protection through changes to provincial legislation; provision of clear and direct provincial policy; new requirements regarding landform modification, land stewardship initiatives, community involvement; better information and education and improved agency coordination.

Strategies recognize agricultural land as an essential non-renewable resource that must be protected, used, and maintained to meet long term needs and ensure that future generations have options available to them.

A trails strategy was developed outlining mechanisms for creating a GTA wide trail network for all residents of the GTA to enjoy. The strategy is based on a multi-level approach that will enable non-profit groups to get involved in trail creation and maintenance, will ensure the Provincial government is more proactive in creating the skeleton or framework of the interregional trail system, and will encourage municipal participation in providing local connectors.

Aggregates in the GTA Countryside are an important component of the entire GTA economy and, as such the resource must be protected for future use, however not at the expense of natural and cultural heritage objectives.

Growth within the Countryside, including residential, commercial and industrial, must be focused in settlement areas. A hierarchy of three settlements: Growth Centres, Rural Service Centres, and Hamlets should be established for the GTA Countryside. Growth Centres will be the primary focus of any growth that is to occur in the Countryside.

The rural economy was touched upon by the working group in various sections of this report, however it was not dealt with in detail. The economic linkages of the Countryside to the broader GTA economy and the importance of the rural economy to the long term vitality of the Countryside are complex issues which require further detailed study. In addition, further work is needed to examine the financing mechanisms available to assist Countryside municipalities in being partners in the GTA Vision.

In summary, any human activity in the Countryside should be carried out with a strong respect for the environment. The cumulative impacts of any endeavour must be measured and minimized.

The strategies and recommendations of this report, if followed, will ensure realization of the Vision for the Countryside for the GTA in 2021. The GTA's physical, biological, and cultural assets will no longer be squandered, but preserved and enhanced for all residents of the GTA and their guests to enjoy.

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APPENDIX I

COUNTRYSIDE WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

NAME	TITLE	MINISTRY/MUNICIPALITY
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George Peter	Director, Special Projects & Programs	The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto
Susan Seibert	Director of Planning	Town of Aurora
Uwe Sehmrau	Planning Analyst, Recreation Policy Branch	Ministry of Tourism and Recreation
Bill Wilson	Environment Coordinator, Property Administration & Environmental Advisory Serv.	Ministry of Government Services
Kai Yew	Manager, Long Range Planning Policy	Regional Municipality of Durham

APPENDIX II

COUNTRYSIDE WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Greenlands must be protected, maintained, and enhanced in order to protect the environment, quality of life, and economic health of the GTA. The Countryside Working Group, in conjunction with the Urban Form, Infrastructure, and Human Services Groups, will examine growth potential in the GTA in the context of good planning.

This group will:

- define and identify greenlands and cultural areas which require protection and formulate a strategy to protect, maintain, enhance and, where appropriate, link them;
- define and identify the range of uses which occur in the countryside (e.g. agriculture, recreation, aggregate extractions etc.) and establish principles which will enhance the viability and compatibility of rural areas with urban areas;
- identify issues at the rural/urban interface and suggest appropriate mechanisms to address them;
- develop mechanisms for evaluating the health of the natural environment;
- formulate a strategy for defining and establishing a trail system.

APPENDIX III

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIAL PLANS TO PROTECT ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The Countryside Working Group recommends the following policy requirements for municipal Official Plans to protect archaeological resources:

- Official Plans contain a broad policy statement recognizing the importance and benefits of protecting and enhancing archaeological sites;
- recognition of the fragile and non-renewable nature of archaeological resources and the resultant preferred protection option of leaving sites undisturbed;
- a requirement that site assessments be conducted by a licensed archaeologist and that a satisfactory report is submitted to Planning Department staff prior to approval of any land disturbing activity;
- a requirement that when archaeological resource assessments are undertaken, they comply with the current Ministry of Culture and Communications' "Archaeological Assessment Technical Guidelines";
- need for awareness re: value of recreation and that there is some revenue to municipalities due to higher property values near greenlands;
- a requirement that where archaeological resources are identified, a plan for protection or salvage of the resource be approved by the Planning Department and the Ministry of Culture and Communications (MCC) and completed prior to land disturbance;
- enabling policies for the protection or salvage of resources including parkland dedication, purchases and bonusing;
- authority for municipal staff to protect the resources through other means such as agreements with the MCC other agencies (i.e. Region);
- a requirement that the Planning Department establish a protocol with other departments, such as engineering and municipal and regional public works, that ensures that all appropriate construction projects are subject to heritage assessment prior to any land disturbing activity;
- a requirement that the Planning Department develop and adopt, in consultation with the MCC, other agencies, landowners, and the public, a "Contingency Plan for the Protection of Heritage Resources in Urgent Situations";
- a requirement for undertaking heritage resource assessments in advance of all Official Plan amendments, zoning by-laws, plans of subdivision and industrial and business park applications, and other types of land disturbance (i.e. building permits, fill and construction permits, and Schedule B and C projects under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessments), where the subject lands are thought to have moderate to a high heritage potential.

APPENDIX IV

NATURAL HERITAGE FEATURES AND AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE

The following is a list of natural heritage features along with the agency responsible for their identification:

- Class 1 to 7 wetlands, as defined by MNR Regional and District Offices;
- Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI's), as established by MNR Regional Offices;
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's) designated in Official Plans, under the *Planning Act, 1983*. These designation have been identified under a variety of names including, Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Areas of Environmental Concern, and Environmental Protection Areas;
- ESA's as determined by Conservation Authorities;
- geographic, biophysical and landscape features protected by special designation such as the *Niagara Escarpment Plan*, including Escarpment Natural Areas and Escarpment Rural Areas;
- habitats of species, as identified by MNR, designated in Ontario Regulation 287 under the *Endangered Species Act*;
- habitat of threatened, rare and endangered species, as determined by the MNR Threatened, Rare and Endangered Species Mapping Program, or as it may be expanded over time;
- habitats of threatened, rare and endangered species, proposed by any individual or group, and confirmed as significant by an MNR District or Regional office;
- groundwater recharge sites, geographic areas which permit a high rate of infiltration into saturated zones of subsurface water (aquifers), as identified in official plans;
- federal lands and facilities designated as environmentally significant;
- valley and stream corridors and shorelines as protected and regulated by MNR and conservation authorities.

APPENDIX V

GLOSSARY

AMO - Association of Municipalities of Ontario

ANSI - Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest as designated by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Cultural Heritage Feature - features in the landscape that reflect the result of human activity in the past.

Cultural Heritage Landscape - a cultural heritage landscape is the product of human activities over time in modifying the landscape, and is an aggregation of human constructed features such as a village, farmland, waterways, transportation corridors, and other artifacts.

Cumulative Impact - the combined impacts of all activities in an area over time, and the incremental impacts associated with individual projects in an area over time.

EAA - Environmental Assessment Act

Easement - a negotiated interest in the land of another which allows the easement holder specified uses or rights without actual ownership of the land.

ESA - Environmentally Sensitive Areas

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

GIS - Geographical Information Systems

GTA - Greater Toronto Area

MCC - Ministry of Culture and Communications

MNR - Ministry of Natural Resources

MTRCA - Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

Natural Heritage Benefits - the environmental, social and economic benefits provided by natural areas. Figure 2 presents a list of the potential benefits of natural areas.

Natural Heritage Feature - any biophysical entity such as plants, animals or landforms that either individually or in conjunction with other features provide natural heritage benefits.

Natural Heritage Systems - a group of connected natural areas protected and managed for the provision of existing and potential natural heritage benefits. They include natural core areas, corridors and connecting links.

OMAF - Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food



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